

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
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O R 230920Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2567
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 1574

CINCPAC FOR LAD

3.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, MY
SUBJECT: DATUK HARUN GOES TO JAIL?

REF 77 KUALA LUMPUR 3694

1. SUMMARY. FORMER SELANGOR CHIEF MINISTER AND UMNO
YOUTH LEADER DATUK HARUN IDRIS FAILED IN HIS APPEAL TO
THE PRIVY COUNCIL IN LONDON ON TWO CORRUPTION CASES
AND RETURNED TO KUALA LUMPUR FEB. 20, OSTENSIBLY TO
SURRENDER HIMSELF TO THE AUTHORITIES AND BEGIN HIS
SIX-YEAR JAIL SENTENCE. HOWEVER, ON FEB. 23, THE
DAY HE WAS TO GO TO JAIL, HUNDREDS OF HARUN'S MALAY
SUPPORTERS SURROUNDED HIS HOUSE, DECLARED HE WAS
BEING HELD "CAPTIVE," AND DEMANDED THAT HARUN BE
PARDONED. AT COB FEB. 23 HARUN REMAINED IN HIS
HOUSE SURROUNDED BY HIS SUPPORTERS. ALTHOUGH
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THE SITUATION AT HARUN'S HOUSE IS TENSE, THE GOM
HAS TAKEN SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS TO MINIMIZE THE
CHANCES OF VIOLENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. ON FEB. 17 THE MALAYSIAN PRESS REPORTED THAT
THE PRIVY COUNCIL IN LONDON HAD ON FEB. 16 DIS-
MISSED HARUN'S PETITIONS FOR SPECIAL LEAVE TO

APPEAL HIS CONVICTIONS IN TWO CORRUPTION CASES IN MALAYSIA, THUS EXHAUSTING THE APPEALS PROCESS FOR THESE CASES AND CONFIRMING THE CONVICTIONS. ON FEB. 20 HARUN RETURNED TO KUALA LUMPUR FROM LONDON. HE WAS MET AT THE AIRPORT BY A HUGE CROWD OF YOUTHFUL MALAY SUPPORTERS WHOM HE ADDRESSED FROM THE TOP OF A CAR AND URGED TO REMAIN CALM AND ALLOW THE LAW TO TAKE ITS COURSE. HARUN DID SAY, HOWEVER, "I THINK I AM INNOCENT FROM THE POINT OF LAW AND MORALITY," AND HE ALLOWED ONE OF HIS SUPPORTERS TO ANNOUNCE THAT HE WOULD LEAD A DELEGATION TO MEET THE PRIME MINISTER AND SEEK HIS ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING AN UNCONDITIONAL PARDON FROM THE KING.

3. ON FEB. 22 HARUN TOLD NEWSMEN THAT, ALTHOUGH HE HAD HOPED HE WOULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN AT LEAST ONE OR TWO WEEKS BEFORE REPORTING TO PRISON, THAT HE WOULD ENTER JAIL ON FEB. 23 IN RESPONSE TO A COURT DIRECTIVE. PLAYING ON HIS SUPPORTERS' SYMPATHIES, HARUN SAID "I AM PREPARED TO GO (TO JAIL) WITH SMALL BAG CONTAINING A PRAYER MAT AND RELIGIOUS BOOKS." HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT HE HAD RECENTLY BEEN TREATED FOR A LEG CONDITION, BUT REASSURED HIS SUPPORTERS THAT IT WAS NOT SERIOUS ENOUGH TO REQUIRE AN OPERATION.
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4. ACCORDING TO AFTERNOON PRESS REPORTS AND CONTACTS WITH LOCAL JOURNALISTS, HARUN SUPPORTERS BEGAN TO GATHER AT HIS HOUSE THE EVENING OF FEB. 22. BY EARLY MORNING FEB. 23 A CROWD OF HUNDREDS HAD GATHERED, AND AN UMNO YOUTH LEADER TOLD REPORTERS THAT SELANGOR UMNO YOUTH HAD TAKEN OVER THE HOUSE AND WAS HOLDING HARUN CAPTIVE "UNTIL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER COME UP WITH SATISFACTORY RESULTS." ANOTHER SUPPORTER TOLD THE PRESS, "WE DEMAND THAT DATUK HARUN BE PARDONED." IN THE PAST ANTI-NATIONAL AND SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS, GANGSTERS AND THE LIKE HAVE BEEN GIVEN A CHANCE TO HAVE THEIR APPEALS HEARD. "WE WANT DATUK HARUN TO GET THE SAME TREATMENT." BY COB FEB. 23 HARUN REMAINED IN THE HOUSE SURROUNDED BY THE CROWD.

5. ALMOST ALL OF THE ACTIVITY IN THIS INCIDENT HAS TAKEN PLACE AT HARUN'S RESIDENCE LOCATED IN AN UNCROWDED SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD. POLICE FIELD FORCE AND FEDERAL RESERVE UNIT PERSONNEL

HAVE BEEN CALLED OUT AND ARE STATIONED AT STRATEGIC POINTS AROUND THE CITY TO CONTROL THE MOVEMENTS OF SUSPECTED AGITATORS, ESPECIALLY YOUNG MALAYS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT MANY CHINESE STAYED IN THEIR HOMES THE EVENING OF FEB. 22, AND THAT THEY ARE PLANNING TO DO SO AGAIN THE NIGHT OF FEB. 23, ALTHOUGH THE DAYTIME TRAFFIC AND CROWDS DOWNTOWN DURING THE DAY ON FEB. 23 SEEMED ABOUT NORMAL.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 1574

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. COMMENT. AS HAS BEEN THE CASE AT EVERY STAGE OF THE COURT CASES AGAINST HARUN, THE GOM REMAINS ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF THE POTENTIAL FOR RACIAL DISTURBANCES SHOULD HARUN'S EMOTIONAL YOUNG SUPPORTERS DECIDED TO VENT THEIR FRUSTRATIONS VIA MOB VIOLENCE. ACCORDING TO MOST ACCOUNTS, THE RACIAL VIOLENCE OF MAY 13, 1969, STARTED WITH CROWDS OF YOUNG MALAYS GATHERED AT HARUN'S CHIEF MINISTER'S RESIDENCE IN THE HEART OF A MALAY SECTION OF KUALA LUMPUR. THE SUBURBAN SETTING OF THE HOUSE HARUN NOW LIVES IN SHOULD HELP PRECLUDE A REOCCURENCE, AS SHOULD THE GOM'S CAREFUL ACTION IN MAKING PARAMILITARY POLICE HIGHLY VISIBLE THROUGHOUT THE CITY AND CONTROLLING THE MOVEMENTS OF POTENTIAL AGITATORS.

WE CANNOT TELL YET WHETHER THE "CAPTURE" OF
DATUK HARUN IS INSPIRED BY HIM OR THE SPON-
TANEOUS ACTION OF HIS SUPPORTERS.
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